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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; October 13, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo
Seoul to Resume Food Aid to N. Korea

JoongAng Ilbo, Seoul Shinmu, All TVs
[1](#)N. Korea Test-Fires Five Short-Range Missiles

Dong-a Ilbo
ROKG to Form Task Force to Handle
Controversial Sejong City Project

Hankook Ilbo
Behind-the-Scenes Dialogue Underway Between Two Koreas

Hankyoreh Shinmun
Economic Stimulus Measures Pushed by ROKG Cause
Local Government Debts to Jump Four Trillion Won

Segye Ilbo
Ruling GNP Considers Scaling Down Sejong City Project

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

According to a key ROKG official, Seoul has decided to resume humanitarian food aid to North Korea which has been suspended since the summer of 2007, and is reviewing the timing and size of such aid. (Chosun)

According to Unification Ministry Spokesman Chun Hae-sung, the ROKG yesterday proposed to North Korea two separate talks to discuss the prevention of flooding at a river that runs across the border as well as the resumption of reunions for separated families. (All)

According to a senior ruling party official, behind-the-scenes talks are underway between the two Koreas to discuss pending bilateral issues, including the resumption of tours to Mt. Kumgang in North Korea. (Hankook)

According to an ROKG source, North Korea yesterday test-fired five short-range KN-02 surface-to-surface missiles off its east coast. The tests came hours after the ROKG proposed inter-Korean talks on humanitarian issues. (All)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-N. Korea

The ROK media on Monday gave wide attention to Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's press remarks made after an Oct. 10 summit in Beijing with the ROK and Japan. The Chinese premier was quoted as saying: "North Korea appeared 'flexible' about the Six-Party Talks. The North wants to improve ties not only with the U.S. but also with the ROK and Japan. This is the chance to hold talks with North Korea."

Conservative Chosun Ilbo editorialized: "What is important is whether any talks that take place can actually persuade North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons and contribute to the prosperity of Northeast Asia. Before the U.S.-North Korea talks, the countries in the Six-Party Talks must first come up with a consensus about how they want to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue. The success or failure of a solution for the nuclear crisis depends on whether the ROK, China, Japan and the U.S. can unite behind a feasible solution rather than just words."

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Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo's editorial, meanwhile, argued: "North Korea has yet to specifically express its willingness to give up its nuclear ambitions. ... China seems to have decided to strengthen its mediation role in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue following Chinese Premier Wen's visit to Pyongyang. ... However, it is doubtful whether China is making sufficient efforts to live up to international expectations."

Citing an ROKG source, all ROK media today reported on North Korea's test-firing yesterday of five short-range KN-02 surface-to-surface missiles off its east coast. Most media cited ROK officials as viewing the tests as routine military exercises. Conservative Chosun Ilbo, however, speculated that the tests may be the North's saber-rattling, given the country's unresolved request for the return of North Koreans who recently defected to the ROK by sea. Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo, meanwhile, conjectured that North Korea may be aiming to gain the upper hand in the run-up to bilateral and multilateral talks on its nuclear program.

-President Obama's Nobel Peace Prize

Conservative Dong-a Ilbo editorialized on Monday: "The Norwegian Nobel Committee's extraordinary decision may have meant that President Obama and the U.S. should understand the dignity and significance of Nobel Peace Prize and devote more efforts to world peace. ... President Obama's visions noted by the Nobel Committee cannot be easily accomplished. In order to reduce arms in the world and to make the world nuclear-free, President Obama should sign a follow-on agreement to START-1 with Russia and get North Korea and Iran to dismantle their nuclear programs. These definitely are not simple tasks. The world is expecting bold challenges from President Obama."

OPINIONS/EDITORIALS

KIM JONG-IL'S CONDITIONAL RETURN TO SIX-PARTY TALKS
(Dong-a Ilbo, October 13, 2009, Page 38; Excerpts)

By Han Seung-joo, former Foreign Minister and current Korean University Professor

At a meeting with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, which was held during

the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Sino-North Korea diplomatic ties, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il pocketed many benefits. He was promised economic aid from China, raised the possibility of bilateral talks with the U.S., and enhanced his own standing and authority over the communist state. What is most noteworthy is, however, that Pyongyang shifted the attention of other nations away from the North's denuclearization and international sanctions against the North for its nuclear possession and tests to the Six-Party Talks.

However, the reason why the Six-Party Talks itself became a bargaining chip for the North is that other Six-Party nations stressed the importance of the multilateral talks and showed an obsession with the talks, thereby increasing the price for Pyongyang's return to it. By declaring its resumption of nuclear activities and boycott of the Six-Party Talks, North Korea created a situation where Six-Party countries had to focus their diplomatic efforts on persuading the North to return to the Six-Party Talks. When North Korean leader Kim mentioned the Six-Party Talks during the recent meeting with the visiting Chinese Premier, it appeared as if there was a diplomatic progress.

Kim not only succeeded in raising the price of the Six-Party Talks but also set conditions for the North's return to the talks. Now it is the North that decides if there is any result from bilateral dialogue. With no clear criteria for judging whether a certain outcome is satisfactory or not, even if the North drags its feet over rejoining the Six-Party Talks, other Six-Party nations, such as the U.S. and China, will have no countermeasure against the North's

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stalling tactics. In addition, if an outcome of U.S.-North Korea bilateral dialogue is not satisfactory, the North now has an excuse to pass the responsibility for the collapse of the talks to the U.S.

Now that Pyongyang has succeeded in making other Six-Party nations seek the Six-Party Talks, there is little chance that the North is denuclearized. Even if the North rejoins the Six-Party Talks, it does not necessarily mean the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue, that is, the complete denuclearization of the North. This is because, even if the North returns to the talks and reaches an agreement, it will slice up bargaining trade-offs into thin slices to gain as many concessions as possible and postpone taking an important step. Breaking this vicious cycle of "crisis-negotiation-agreement-abrogation" is the goal of the "grand bargain" or "comprehensive package," which is pursued by the ROK and the U.S.

What the Six-Party nations, excluding the North, can do at this moment is to devise a joint strategy for resolving the North Korean nuclear issue and to closely cooperate to implement it under the basic principle of a nuclear-free North.

ROK'S RETRIEVAL OF WARTIME OPERATIONAL CONTROL FROM U.S. IS FOOLISH
(JoongAng Ilbo, October 13, 2009, page 47: Excerpts)

By Senior journalist Moon Chang-geuk

The Roh Moo-hyun Administration underscored "self-reliance." This position meant dismantling the alliance between the ROK and the U.S. with the goal of retrieving wartime operational control from the U.S. Few Koreans will voice opposition to self-reliant defense. It is so natural for us to defend our territory with our own power. The question is whether the ROK has such a capability.

Presidents of the ROK and the U.S. hold the position as commanders-in-chief (of their nation's armed forces.) However, in the U.S., many professional military officers state their personal opinions (even if they oppose the President.) Examples include Supreme Commander MacArthur who stepped down due to conflicts with President Truman during the Korean War, other generals who withdrew from their duties due to their opposition to the U.S. government's Iraq operation, and recently Commander General McChrystal who openly

objected to President Obama's Afghan policy. Armed forces professionals should shoulder the responsibility to protect the security of their country. Did the ROK defense minister and military leaders live up to their professional obligations when they signed on to an agreement to dismantle the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command despite their awareness that the ROK will not be fully prepared to transfer wartime operational control until April 2012?

Let's assume that the wartime operational control has been transferred to the ROK. How will the ROK respond to any attack by a nuclear-armed North Korea? The ROKG realized that, based on the 2007 simulation results conducted by the National Emergency Planning Commission, a nuclear bomb attack could cause 500,000 to a million casualties in Seoul. Despite this knowledge, did the ROK think that it could achieve self-defense only by taking over wartime control? We will end up being a permanent hostage to North Korea. We should keep our eyes more wide-open. Look at China, which grew as the world's second largest military power. We should ask ourselves whether this small country neighboring China could protect itself only by calling for self-defense. Why are we so impatient to destroy the established walls of security? We should "hold onto" the U.S. until at least the North Korean nuclear issue is resolved and, from the long perspective, collective security takes hold so that Northeast Asian countries can trust one another. We should not stick to the goal of misplaced self-reliance any longer. The ROK should enter into renegotiations (with the U.S.) over the transfer of wartime control.

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OBAMA WINS NOBEL PEACE PRIZE
(Dong-a Ilbo, October 12, 2009, page 35)

The world showed mixed reactions to U.S. President Barack Obama's designation as this year's Nobel peace laureate. Critics say that he is not fully qualified to win the prize because he has been in office less than nine months and his visions assessed by the Norwegian Nobel Committee have not yet been accomplished. The Norwegian Nobel Committee's extraordinary decision may have meant that President Obama and the U.S. should understand the dignity and significance of Nobel Peace Prize and devote more efforts to world peace.

Announcing the award, the Nobel Committee said that President Obama gave the world "hope for a better future." Elected the first black president in U.S. history, he sent a strong message to the world to ease racial and religious conflicts. His visions, including "a nuclear free world," are gaining momentum as a global task. In response to the Committee's decision, Obama rightly said that he "would accept it as a "call to action" to work with other nations to solve the problems of the 21st century."

President Obama redefined the way the U.S. deals with international issues in a new manner even though he has not yielded tangible results in a short time. Unlike his predecessors, Obama is gaining high support for trying to jointly tackle issues with countries concerned through dialogue and cooperation, without resorting to unilateralism.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee also said, "Obama has as President created a new climate in international politics. Multilateral diplomacy has regained a central position, with emphasis on the role that the United Nations and other international institutions can play. Dialogue and negotiations are preferred as instruments for resolving even the most difficult international conflicts." President Obama and the U.S. should make more efforts to promote this model for resolving international issues.

President Obama decided to close down the controversial Guantanamo Bay prison and returned to the process of concluding a climate change treaty, from which former President George W. Bush withdrew. This course of action is appropriate in light of universal values of humanity, regardless of controversy in the U.S. over President Obama's Nobel Peace prize. He has consistently sent North Korea and

Iran a message that their nuclear weapons will not be tolerated. North Korea should bear in mind the fact that the Nobel Committee thought highly of President Obama's vision for a nuclear-weapons-free world.

President Obama's visions noted by the Nobel Committee cannot be easily accomplished. In order to reduce arms in the world and to make the world nuclear-free, President Obama should sign a follow-on agreement to START-1 with Russia and get North Korea and Iran to dismantle their nuclear programs. These definitely are not simple tasks. The world is expecting bold challenges from President Obama.

STEPHENS